

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A voice response unit (VRU) includes a silent prompt feature in the form of an intentional delay inserted after a message is given to a caller, during which delay the caller may invoke alternative processing or interrupt current processing. If appropriate alternative or interrupt commands are not received during the delay period, then processing continues as provided in accordance with the previously played message. The duration of this silent prompt delay is carefully selected to provide sufficient response time for the caller to request alternative processing, while avoiding a perceptible or objectionable delay to the average caller not requiring alternative processing. Optimally, this delay period should be within a range of one to two and one-half seconds and, preferably, within a range of 1.2 to 2.3 seconds, an optimal time being 1.8 seconds.